

OCCUPATIONAL STRESS AMONG SOFTWARE ENGINEERS IN SRI LANKA

By

H.D.D. Kumara

Supervised By

Dr. V.M. Wickramasinghe

The Dissertation was submitted to the Department of Management of Technology of the University of Moratuwa in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree of Master of Business Administration.

Department of Management of Technology

University of Moratuwa

December 2008

92417

Abstract

Occupational stress is currently one of the most costly occupational health issues. The deleterious implications for individuals and organizations are manifold, and can result in serious physical and psychological illness for individuals, and major resource loss for organizations. The aim of this study to examine whether software engineers in Sri Lanka experiencing occupational stress. The research had four objectives, that is to identify the level of stress, investigate the perceived sources of stress, investigate the consequences of occupational stress and finally to identify the stress management strategies practiced by software engineers in Sri Lanka.

The sample of this research included 138 randomly selected software engineers from eight software firms in Sri Lanka. The selected eight software firms employed more than 100 software engineers, which supplies software solutions for international and local markets.

The analysis revealed that the stress levels reported by respondents are not as excessive as that has been found in studies of other occupational groups. The results indicate that the software engineers are very rarely been stressed. There are no significant occupational stress variations between age groups, gender, job status, experience, or educational level. Results indicate the main sources of stress for software engineers, are role he/she plays in the organization, relationships within the organization, and management style of the organization. The other three sources considered in this study, factors intrinsic to job, career development and technology found not to be significantly correlate to occupational stress.

Job performance, private health and career commitment considered as three consequences of occupational stress in this study. It was found that occupational stress has significant relationship with the performance of the software engineers.

There are several coping methods implemented by individual and organizations. Software engineers commonly use stress management strategies like, talk to family and friends, advice from experts/superiors/friends, and negative coping methods like smoking. Limitations of this study are the size of the sample selected, data collection method, and number of indicators used to measure variables. These limitations will make way to further research, possible using different occupation stress model.